IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the second paragraph starting on page 7, line 17, and ending on page 8, line 4, with the following:

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Each input/output card 302A, 302B, includes a number of modules, as will presently be described, that can be implemented as hardware, software or using a combination of hardware and software. (Alternatively, one or more of these modules could be implemented in the controller 316.) A packet parser/address analyzer 304A, 304B, parses each packet to extract one or more addresses preferably more than one address, data, and optionally header data associated with each address. Address associater 306A, 306B, is communicatively coupled to the packet parser/address analyzer 304A, 304B, and to a forwarding table 310A, 310B. The forwarding table 310A, 310B, can be implemented as a table stored in a memory on the input/output port cards 302A, 302B. The forwarding table includes a plurality of records consisting of destination addresses, and corresponding next hop addresses. The address associater 306A, 306B, examines the one or more addresses parsed from a packet by the packet parser/address analyzer 304A, 304B, and associates together those addresses that are determined based on the forwarding table 310A, 310B, to have the same next hop address. New packet composers ~~310A, 310B~~ 308A, 308B, are communicatively coupled to respective address associaters 306A, 306B. The new packet composers ~~310A, 310B~~ 308A, 308B, compose one or more packets each of which includes at least one address that has been determined to correspond to the same next hop address by the address associater.

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